

MARRIAGE

100 Years From Now



Dr. Ira S. Wile, Psychiatrist,
Expresses the Opinion That the State
May Control All Mating a Century
Hence, With Eugenics as the
Chief Thought in Mind.

By Hannah Stein

MORE than 100 years ago prototypes of Cinderella forsook their humble corner in a humble home to marry a Prince. That was the type of fairy-tale Hans Christian Andersen conceived for Danish children of his day and forever hence.

But Dr. Ira S. Wile, a more practical thinker than Andersen, an author, physician and psychiatrist, in looking ahead at marriage 100 years from now, rubbed his Aladdin's lamp and asked quite naturally:

"What will you have? A marriage in China? Then you may have polygamy. Among the Todas, a matriarchy and polyandry. If you want a marriage in India 100 years hence you may choose anything you wish. And if you prefer to live in Russia at that time it is safe to assume that you will get what Russians are enjoying now, an 'on and off' marriage—trial, companionate, consecutive monogamy without guarantee; with a proviso that when you are ready to have it ended, you just send your mate a postcard to let him know when he wakes up the next morning that he is divorced."

FOR an appreciable moment Dr. Wile fancied the transition of marriage within a casual radius of 100 years.

"True, there always will be diversities in marriage on the basis of the traditions of the various countries," he said. "Political and religious domination will always prevail over the social status of a commonwealth. But in a civilization like ours, for instance, what innovations are reasonable to expect in 100 years?"

"It seems to me that by that time eugenics will be such an important factor in marriage that I fancy there will be a central clearing house for matrimonial purposes."

"I mean there will be a bureau of records under Government control from the moment one is born. The procedure will be like this. When a birth certificate is filed in the Hall of Records, a copy will be sent to this personnel department and the record kept up to date, pro and con, that is, not only will the progress of the individual be recorded but also all his physical and mental defects, blemishes, congenital diseases and imperfections of any kind through inheritance, accident or acquisition."

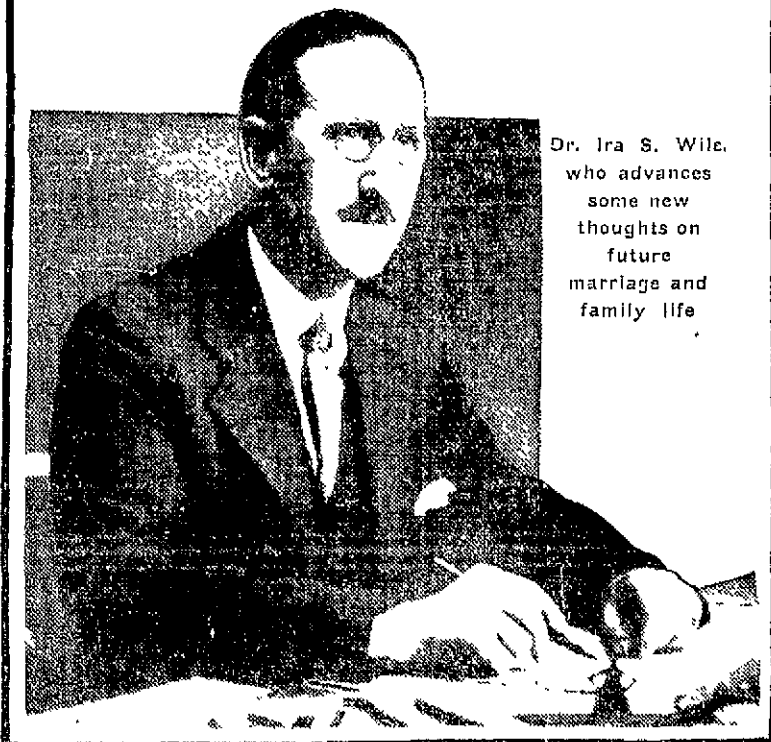
"For illustration, Tom Smith—the Smiths and the Joneses and the Browns will still be popular 100 years from now—Tom Smith is 25 years of age and, according to his record, he is of the selective type. Tall, normal mentally and physically, good to look at on the photograph, college bred, belonging to a cultivated family and economically stable."

"Tom Smith wants to marry. So he registers his intentions at the bureau and asks for samples, plans and specifications."

"Now, if the State is to be concerned

Three Rules for Matrimony

"AFFECTION is not really the sole essential in marriage," says Dr. Ira S. Wile. "If you take 100 men and place them on one side of a room, 100 women on the other, and if, on the theory of a 'Paul Jones' dance, you have them run for their partners for marriage without knowing anything about love, you will find that their marriage will work out all right if they observe three important rules: A conscious willingness for livableness, an attitude of respect and tolerance and a generous spirit in character and personality."



Dr. Ira S. Wile, who advances some new thoughts on future marriage and family life

with Tom Smith as the benefactor of the next generation, and if the laws of eugenics are to be observed, the responsibility will rest with the bureau to find for him a proper wife. Simple enough. Case cards will be filed and cross-indexed in such fashion that it will be comparatively easy for a dependable clerk to suit out a number of equally desirable women from whom Tom Smith may choose a mate. Or the case may be the other way around. Either the man or the woman may apply for quotations and specimens.

"So much for the preparation of marriage. Now I fancy that marriage itself will take on so many interesting innovations that we may have a class system as we have for funerals today: a first-class funeral with a position and six white horses; a second-class and less ostentatious funeral; and a third, of a still simpler type."

"But for marriage, the State will be

in charge and the deciding point for 'class' will be public values from the eugenics point of view, or the selectiveness of the breed."

BEFORE we went any further with the discussion on marriage, which Dr. Wile built up on a fanciful theory of an indeterminate sentence or his novel recommendation for continuity in marriage by annual rejection of divorce, he reverted to a contemporary preface to marriage known as courtship in the year 1933.

"Courtship is a relatively modern institution and we find it only in extremely emancipated countries," he said. "In the Orient, for instance, a courtship between a boy and girl as we know it here is almost unheard of. In China you still find that a young man may have little idea of what his bride is like until after the wedding ceremony. The same custom prevails in al-

most every Eastern country where women live in separate quarters or where they must cover the face with a veil."

"Right here in the United States, along the Pacific coast, Japanese immigrants have often selected their brides from photographs sent over to them from Japan. No courtship, none of the amorous preliminaries which enter into the lives of American young people before the boy asks the girl for her hand. There is, nevertheless, an element of romance in all marriage. There is the romance of adventure and risk."

"Among the trappers in the northern part of Canada, a group of potential wives were selected and sent to them by their native countries. And they married without previous acquaintance and courtship; their marriages are as successful as anywhere else. And many are happy ever after."

"You see, affection in marriage is a comparatively new thing. It is a recent development under the social coercion in which we live. It is a psychological condition grown out of so-called higher civilization and is the natural consequence in this age of individualism."

"But affection is not really the sole essential in marriage. If you take 100 men and place them on one side of the room, 100 women on the other, and if, on the theory of a 'Paul Jones' dance, you have them run for their partners for marriage without knowing anything about love, you will find that their marriages will work out all right without a courtship if they observe three important rules:

"A conscious willingness for livableness, an attitude of respect and tolerance, and a generous spirit in character and personality."

THOUGH Dr. Wile himself half confessed that a subject of this kind can only be discussed by way of genial banter, it is interesting, nevertheless, to have this fanciful point of view from one of the most famous physicians on emotional ills.

A Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association, once president of the American Orthopsychiatric Association, a founder of the New York School Lunch System and physician at the Mount Sinai Hospital in New York among other affiliations, one finds every hour in his office men and women who seek his advice on how to go on.

"If marriage is to be the outcome of a careful pattern 100 years from now," Dr. Wile continued, "then its termination should be an integral part of the plan."

"When I suggested different 'class' marriages a moment ago, I had in mind that the tenure of every marriage should be determined right at the beginning and should be based on the conditions in each case. The question to be asked in each case is to be this: Is it going to be profitable to the State, or hazardous, to bind a couple for an indeterminate or a definite period?"

"On the other hand, there may be a ten-year marriage and a five-year marriage, which will carry only reasonable assurance; but these certificates will contain a guarantee of continuity which will be the State's sanction that they may renew their contract if they wish. In other words, the permanent marriage certificate will only designate the attitude of the State, without making it compulsory that it be permanent; whereas the short-term marriage need not be dissolved if two persons wish to go on."

"YOU see, with marriages made in the bureau on the basis of equality, the whole matter of marriage and divorce will be under such perfect control that all marriage certificates, except the permanent ones will include the coupon for divorce, with dividends attached."

"In point of fact, we have reason to believe that 100 years will not alter the fundamental conditions that have been built up under a definite social system. Returning to China again, it is hardly likely that there will be any change in their laws on divorce. Today, a Chinese cannot divorce a wife whom he married when they were poor and she worked side by side with him. A Mohammedan cannot divorce a woman whose parents are dead and who has no home to return to. When he does divorce his wife, he must return the dowry she brought to him. The primitive Apache divorced as the Russian does today—merely sending word to the mate that the marriage is off."

"Under the new arrangement we are predicting for our own United States, it seems to me that the Government also will be able to control population and dictate a decentralized plan."

"Plato did that once by advising that only 50,000 people should be within a given area. Even today, nomadic races who live on the plunder they pick up as they go along and have only a limited supply of food have certain rights against increases in population. If there is not enough food to go around and a woman is careless enough to have twins, she may have to kill one child. If she is care-

less enough to bear another set of twins, the tribe may kill her. That, apparently, is the primitive idea of birth control."

"So much for numbers. Now for types. That, too, will be under State control. The Maori (an Australian tribe) discovered more than a thousand years ago that war had affected the race adversely. Some of the best men in the service of the people had been killed by some insignificant weaklings who happened to have some skill with a bow and arrow. And their tallest men, because of their singular height, usually were among the first to fall."

"WHEN they realized that the race had become depleted of their best specimens, they devised another plan. They substituted hand-to-hand fighting for bows and arrows. Fight they must, but instead of putting the first-class stock in the first line of battle, they let the second-class men go forward and the generals behind. If some had to die, let it be the poorer ones who were unfit for parenthood."

"By our own scheme of marriage and generally accepted control 100 years from now, we not only will control numbers but also influence the age at death. In the last fifty years we have raised the average age at death by fifteen years. And it seems to me that with a higher breed in 100 years hence we may be able to increase it from 55 to 70 or 80 or possibly 90 years of age."

"But at all times and as far ahead as you please, there always will arise certain conditions which will influence the social compulsions of that time. If there will be a great war and a large majority of men will die out, it may be necessary to introduce polygamy again. If some pestilence should destroy a large number of women, we may have polyandry sanctioned by the State. All depends upon the social theory that unforeseen conditions may affect and develop."

"If the laboring class dies out for some reason or other, the bureau may have to provide a specially bred class to carry on nonintellectual and heavy kinds of manual work. And if the times call for a highly specialized group of philosophers and thinkers, an effort will be made to supply these rare people."

AFTER all these fanciful expedients, when individualism will go out and robotism will come in, what will become of the home?

"No doubt the family will be a small one," he said. "Men and women will work and play much more together, and mothers may give up their sons to the State as the Spartan women did years ago. Or all children may be raised in a creche according to the needs of the State. The machine will work harder and faster, people will enjoy more leisure, and as far as it is humanly possible, people will strive to control their own destiny in terms of satisfactions, pleasure and acceptance of life as it then moves on to further changes."

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